



### Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Drops to 5.1 percent in December

- ◆ RI's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December was 5.1 percent, down one-tenth of a percentage point from November.
- ◆ RI's December unemployment rate was down one and seven-tenths percentage points from last December's figure of 6.8 percent.
- ◆ The national rate was 5.0 percent, unchanged from November and down six-tenths of a percentage point from the previous year.
- ◆ In December 2015, Rhode Island (5.1%) had the nineteenth highest unemployment rate in the nation. Seven states had unemployment rates of six percent or higher.
- ◆ The December 2015 unemployment rate decreased in twenty-five states, including Maine (-0.1), New Hampshire (-0.1), Vermont (-0.1) and Rhode Island (-0.1). Eleven states' rates, including Massachusetts, were unchanged, while fourteen states' rates, including Connecticut (+0.1), increased.
- ◆ Rates in other New England states for December 2015 – Connecticut 5.2 percent, Massachusetts 4.7 percent, Maine 4.0 percent, Vermont 3.6 percent and New Hampshire 3.1 percent.
- ◆ The number of employed RI residents totaled 526,500 in December 2015, down 400 from the previous month. Between December 2014 and December 2015, the number of employed RI residents was up 14,900.
- ◆ Over the month, the number of unemployed Rhode Island residents decreased by 400 to 28,400. From December 2014 to December 2015, the number of unemployed residents decreased by 8,800.

### Alternate Measures of Labor Underutilization for Rhode Island

There are six alternative measures of labor underutilization available through the Current Population Survey (CPS) which provide narrower as well as broader definitions of labor underutilization. These alternative measures, which are referred to as U-1 through U-6, are available on a quarterly basis. While state unemployment averages derived solely from the CPS data are not strictly comparable to the official state average unemployment rates, these alternative measures can provide insight into the volume of states' discouraged populations and those working part-time for economic reasons.

- ◆ The U-3 rate is the rate closest to the standard definition of unemployment - individuals in the labor force without a job who are available for and actively seeking work. Rhode Island's average unemployment rate for 2015 obtained directly from the CPS survey was 5.9 percent, tied for the tenth highest rate among all states. The national U-3 rate was 5.3 percent.
- ◆ Expanding this definition to include "discouraged workers" (U-4), individuals who want a job, but have given up looking for work because they believe no work available for them, yields an unemployment rate of 6.2 percent, tied for the fourteenth highest rate among all states. The national U-4 rate was 5.7 percent. Including discouraged workers adds three-tenths of a percentage point to Rhode Island's standard definition of unemployment while adding four-tenths of a percentage point to the United State's standard definition. Among the 50 states, 26 states had a greater percentage of discouraged workers than Rhode Island, while 9 had a lower percentage.
- ◆ The inclusion of discouraged workers and those that are "marginally attached" (U-5), individuals who want a job, are currently available for work, but have not looked in the past twelve months for a variety of reasons other than discouragement, yields an unemployment rate of 7.1 percent, tied for the thirteenth highest rate among all states. The national U-5 was 6.4 percent.

#### Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics (in thousands)

	Rhode Island			United States		
	Dec 15	Nov 15	Dec 14	Dec 15	Nov 15	Dec 14
Civilian Labor Force	554.9	555.7	548.8	157,833	157,367	156,142
Resident Employment	526.5	526.9	511.6	149,929	149,444	147,439
Unemployment	28.4	28.8	37.2	7,904	7,924	8,704
Unemployment Rate	5.1%	5.2%	6.8%	5.0%	5.0%	5.6%

- ◆ The broadest measure of unemployment (U-6) includes discouraged workers, marginally attached workers and those working part-time for economic reasons yields an unemployment rate of 11.4 percent for Rhode Island, tied for the tenth highest rate among all states. Nationally, the U-6 rate was 10.4 percent.

## Rhode Island Jobs Increase by 1,100 in December

Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 487,700 in December, reflecting a gain of 1,100 jobs from the revised November estimate of 486,600. The December jobs report marks the third consecutive month of job gains totaling 4,300 jobs, and an average of 1,400 jobs per month. The December nonfarm employment level represents the highest employment level since January 2008 (488,000).

In 2015, 8,400 jobs were added to the local economy, the highest annual gain since 9,500 jobs were added during the year 2000. On average, 700 jobs per month were added in 2015, compared to the 800 jobs per month averaged in 2000. A total of 5,900 jobs were added in 2014, or 500 jobs per month.

The Construction sector reported a surge in employment during the fourth quarter of 2015. During this three month period, the sector cumulated a total of 1,700 jobs, 1,000 of which came in December. Through the first three quarters of 2015, construction employment had been down by 1,800. The end of the year momentum held the annual job loss to 100 in 2015.

The Professional & Business Services sector also posted a strong fourth quarter in 2015, adding 500 jobs in December, preceded by a gain of 500 jobs in October and 300 jobs in November. The sector employed 64,800 workers in December, the highest employment level on record. Professional & Business Services jobs were up 4,200 over the year.

Employment in Transportation & Utilities was up 400 over the month, propelling the employment level above the twelve-thousand mark for the first time ever. Smaller December job gains were reported in the Financial Activities (+200), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+100) and Health Care & Social Assistance (+100) sectors, while employment in the Government, Information, Mining & Logging and Other Services sectors remained even.

The Educational Services sector reported a loss of 700 jobs from November, the first jobs loss reported in this sector since August. Despite the sharp December downfall, employment in Educational Services is up 900 from a year ago.

Smaller job declines were reported within the Accommodation & Food Services (-200), Retail Trade (-100), Manufacturing (-100) and Wholesale Trade (-100) sectors.

In December, the New England regional workforce grew at a rate of 0.1 percent from November, while the nation's workforce grew at 0.2 percent. The number of jobs within the nation increased by 292,000, while the number of jobs in the six state region rose by 6,600.

Massachusetts (+7,100) added the most jobs within the entire New England region on a numeric basis, followed by Maine (+1,300), Rhode Island (+1,100) and Connecticut (+300). Vermont (-2,100) and New Hampshire (-1,100) each reported job losses in December.

Nonfarm payroll employment increased in 36 states in December and decreased in 14 states. The largest over-the-month percentage increase in employment occurred in Alaska (+0.8%) followed by Arkansas, South Carolina, and Tennessee (+0.7% each). The largest over-the-month percentage decline in employment occurred in North Dakota (-0.9%), followed by Vermont (-0.7%) and Wyoming (-0.6%).

### Establishment Employment in Rhode Island Seasonally Adjusted

	Net Change From				
	Dec-15	Nov-15	Dec-14	Nov-15	Dec-14
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>487.7</b>	<b>486.6</b>	<b>479.3</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>8.4</b>
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>428.4</b>	<b>427.3</b>	<b>419.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>9.2</b>
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	16.5	15.5	16.6	1.0	-0.1
Manufacturing	42.0	42.1	41.4	-0.1	0.6
Wholesale Trade	16.3	16.4	17.0	-0.1	-0.7
Retail Trade	46.9	47.0	47.0	-0.1	-0.1
Transportation & Utilities	12.1	11.7	11.4	0.4	0.7
Information	8.5	8.5	8.8	0.0	-0.3
Financial Activities	32.8	32.6	32.5	0.2	0.3
Professional & Business Services	64.8	64.3	60.6	0.5	4.2
Educational Services	25.1	25.8	24.2	-0.7	0.9
Health Care & Social Assistance	80.6	80.5	80.7	0.1	-0.1
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	9.7	9.6	8.6	0.1	1.1
Accommodation & Food Services	48.9	49.1	47.0	-0.2	1.9
Other Services	24.0	24.0	23.2	0.0	0.8
Government	59.3	59.3	60.1	0.0	-0.8

### Manufacturing Employment in Rhode Island Not Seasonally Adjusted

	Employment				
	(in thousands)			Net Change From :	
	Dec 15	Nov 15	Dec 14	Nov 15	Dec 14
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>Durable Goods</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>27.1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg.	5.7	5.7	5.8	0	-100
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg.	3.2	3.2	3.3	0	-100
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	5.1	5.1	4.7	0	400
Miscellaneous DG Manufacturing	5.4	5.4	5.6	0	-200
Jewelry & Silverware	3.2	3.3	3.4	-100	-200
<b>Non-Durable Goods</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>
Chemical Manufacturing	3.0	3.0	3.1	0	-100

*The employment figures in this section are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the state. Not seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is available at: [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/ces.htm](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/ces.htm). Current month's figures are preliminary and subject to change.*



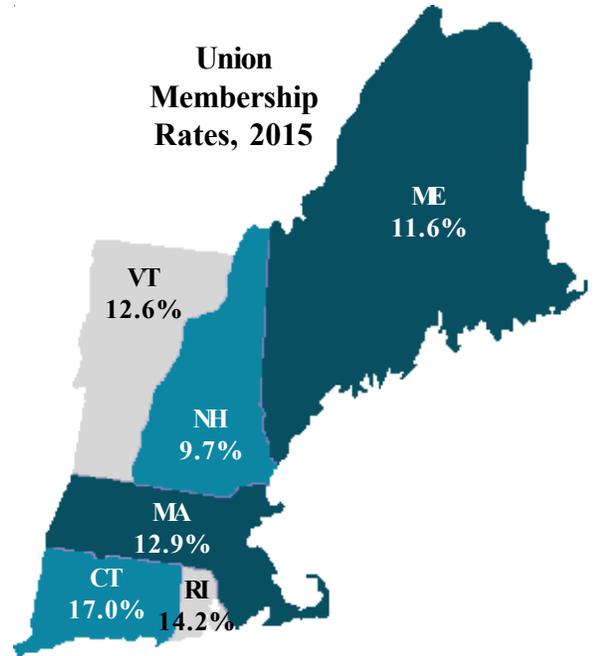
## 2015 Union Membership in Rhode Island

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 14.2 percent (68,000) of Rhode Island private and public sector workers were union members in 2015. This represented an over-the-year decrease of nine-tenths of a percentage points. The number of union members, unchanged from 2014 at 68,000, remained at its lowest level in over twenty years and accounted for the smallest percentage of employed workers in over twenty years.

Nationally, the union membership rate was 11.1 percent in 2015, unchanged from 2014 and well below the 20.1 percent measured in 1983. Among the fifty states, Rhode Island, along with Minnesota, reported the twelfth highest union membership rate, trailing New York (24.7%), Hawaii (20.4%), Alaska (19.6%), Connecticut (17.0%), Washington (16.8%), California (15.9%), New Jersey (15.4%), Michigan (15.2%), Illinois (15.2%), Oregon (14.8%) and Nevada (14.3%). South Carolina (2.1%), North Carolina (3.0%), Utah (3.9%) and Georgia (4.0%) had the lowest union membership rates in 2015.

Regionally, Connecticut (17.0%) had the highest union membership rate in New England, followed by Rhode Island (14.2%), Massachusetts (12.9%), Vermont (12.6%) and Maine (11.6%). Only New Hampshire (9.7%) had union membership rates below the national average.

Union members and workers whose jobs are covered by a union or employee association contract represented 12.3 percent of the nation's wage and salary workers and 14.9 percent of Rhode Island's wage and salary workers. For more information, go to: [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/publications/union.htm](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/publications/union.htm)



## Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed

A total of 8,952 individuals were eligible to collect Unemployment Insurance benefits in December 2015, down 1,568 (-14.9%) from the 10,520 collecting these benefits in December 2014. In all, 33.5 percent of Rhode Island's unemployed workers were eligible to collect unemployment benefits in December.

Of the 8,952 individuals collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits, 22.8 percent faced long-term unemployment (defined as collecting unemployment insurance for fifteen weeks or more), down from 23.5 percent in December 2014.

On an industry basis, 15.8 percent (1,410) of the State's insured unemployed workers came from the Administrative & Waste Services sector. There were also 981 individuals with an attachment to the Health Care & Social Assistance sector, accounting for 11.0 percent of all insured unemployed workers. An additional 10.7 percent (954) of those collecting UI benefits in December had worked in the Construction sector. Large numbers of insured unemployed were also reported in Accommodation & Food Services (925), Manufacturing (866) and Retail Trade (765). For more information, go to [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/uiadmin/characteristics.htm](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/uiadmin/characteristics.htm).

### Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed, December 2015

	Total	Long-Term	Percent Long-Term
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,952</b>	<b>2,041</b>	<b>22.8%</b>
Male	5,035	900	17.9%
Female	3,917	1,141	29.1%
<b>Selected Industries</b>	<b>8,952</b>	<b>2,041</b>	<b>22.8%</b>
Construction	954	88	9.2%
Manufacturing	866	271	31.3%
Wholesale Trade	421	125	29.7%
Retail Trade	765	209	27.3%
Transportation & Warehousing	202	40	19.8%
Information	117	32	27.4%
Finance & Insurance	343	123	35.9%
Real Estate	205	37	18.0%
Professional & Tech. Services	401	112	27.9%
Administrative & Waste Services	1,410	254	18.0%
Educational Services	205	95	46.3%
Health Care & Social Assistance	981	336	34.3%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	403	24	6.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	925	119	12.9%
Other Services	294	76	25.9%
Public Administration	65	13	20.0%

### Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

				% Change
	Dec. 15	Nov. 15	Dec. 14	Prev. Year
All Items	236.5	237.3	234.8	0.7%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Employer Demand for Workers in Rhode Island

The *Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine* (HWOL) data series reported that there were 19,000 advertisements for Rhode Island based jobs this month, a decrease of 2,700 (-12.4%) from the November 2015 postings, and down 1,500 (-7.3%) from the advertised vacancies posted online in December 2014. There were an estimated 3.43 advertised vacancies for every 100 persons in Rhode Island's labor force.

#### Help Wanted OnLine Advertised Job Vacancies

	Dec 15	Nov 15	Dec 14
RI Vacancies	19,000	21,700	20,500
<i>Labor Demand Rate *</i>			
Rhode Island	3.43	3.90	3.74
US	3.44	3.61	3.28
Connecticut	3.92	4.26	3.68
Massachusetts	4.63	4.91	4.30
Maine	3.14	3.55	4.14
New Hampshire	3.65	3.73	3.68
Vermont	3.36	3.73	3.87
<i>Supply/Demand Rate **</i>			
Rhode Island	1.49	1.33	1.81
US	1.46	1.40	1.70

\* Number of advertised vacancies per 100 persons in labor force

\*\* Number of unemployed persons in state per advertised vacancy

Source: The Conference Board

### City & Town Unadjusted Unemployment Rates for December

	2015	2014		2015	2014
Barrington	3.3	4.2	Newport	4.4	5.6
Bristol	4.1	5.5	North Kingstown	3.8	5.0
Burrillville	4.8	6.4	North Providence	4.9	6.3
Central Falls	6.1	7.9	North Smithfield	4.1	5.1
Charlestown	5.0	7.0	Pawtucket	5.5	7.3
Coventry	4.4	5.9	Portsmouth	4.5	5.8
Cranston	4.8	6.2	Providence	5.8	7.4
Cumberland	3.8	5.1	Richmond	2.8	4.0
East Greenwich	4.0	5.5	Scituate	4.5	5.7
East Providence	5.2	6.7	Smithfield	4.2	5.6
Exeter	4.1	5.3	South Kingstown	4.1	5.5
Foster	4.8	6.0	Tiverton	4.4	5.6
Glocester	3.6	4.7	Warren	4.7	6.1
Hopkinton	4.8	6.2	Warwick	4.1	5.5
Jamestown	3.5	4.3	West Greenwich	4.4	5.6
Johnston	5.0	6.6	West Warwick	5.0	6.7
Lincoln	3.9	5.3	Westerly	6.2	8.0
Little Compton	3.3	5.3	Woonsocket	6.3	8.1
Middletown	4.2	5.5			
Narragansett	3.5	4.4	State of R.I.	4.8	6.3
New Shoreham	17.7	21.1	United States	4.8	5.4

Nationally, there were an estimated 3.44 advertised vacancies for every 100 persons in labor force. Among the New England states, Massachusetts (4.63), Connecticut (3.92) and New Hampshire (3.65) had higher vacancy rates than Rhode Island.

There were an estimated 1.49 unemployed Rhode Island residents for every advertised job in December, up from 1.33 unemployed residents estimated per November advertisements. Nationally, there were 1.46 unemployed persons for every job opening advertised in December, up from 1.40 in November.

### Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

	Dec.	Nov.	Dec.	% Change		Year to Date		
	2015	2015	2014	Nov. 15	Dec. 14	2015	2014	% Change
<b>Regular Claims</b>								
Initial Claims	8,682	4,223	9,808	105.6%	-11.5%	67,234	76,712	-12.4%
Number of Payments	35,096	32,156	46,812	9.1%	-25.0%	486,166	559,852	-13.2%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$11.5	\$10.7	\$15.1	7.5%	-23.8%	\$158.3	\$184.2	-14.1%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	757	742	1,111	2.0%	-31.9%	10,081	13,803	-27.0%

## Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization by State 2015 Annual Average

State	Measure					
	U-1	U-2	U-3	U-4	U-5	U-6
United States	2.3	2.6	5.3	5.7	6.4	10.4
Alabama	2.7	2.5	6.1	6.8	7.5	11.2
Alaska	2.3	3.8	6.7	7.2	8.6	12.1
Arizona	2.2	3.0	6.0	6.5	7.4	12.8
Arkansas	1.9	2.6	5.2	5.6	6.4	9.5
California	2.8	3.0	6.2	6.5	7.4	12.7
Colorado	1.3	1.9	3.9	4.0	4.3	7.9
Connecticut	2.8	3.5	5.6	6.1	6.9	10.9
Delaware	2.5	3.0	5.0	5.4	5.9	9.6
District of Columbia	4.4	2.8	6.9	7.3	8.1	10.9
Florida	2.8	2.6	5.4	6.0	6.7	11.5
Georgia	3.1	2.6	5.8	6.3	7.2	11.1
Hawaii	1.5	1.6	3.7	4.1	5.3	9.7
Idaho	1.4	2.2	4.3	4.4	5.0	8.6
Illinois	3.0	3.0	5.9	6.4	7.2	10.9
Indiana	1.7	2.3	4.8	5.1	5.8	9.0
Iowa	0.9	1.8	3.6	3.7	4.3	7.0
Kansas	1.6	2.1	4.3	4.6	5.2	8.2
Kentucky	2.0	2.6	5.4	5.7	6.5	10.3
Louisiana	2.2	3.1	6.2	6.7	7.5	11.1
Maine	1.7	2.2	4.4	4.7	5.6	9.8
Maryland	2.5	2.3	5.2	5.5	6.3	9.3
Massachusetts	2.3	2.7	4.9	5.2	6.0	9.7
Michigan	2.4	2.8	5.4	5.9	6.8	11.4
Minnesota	1.2	2.3	3.8	4.1	4.7	8.2
Mississippi	2.8	3.1	6.5	6.9	7.7	11.7
Missouri	1.5	2.9	5.0	5.4	5.9	9.3
Montana	1.4	2.3	4.1	4.4	4.9	9.0
Nebraska	0.9	1.3	3.0	3.2	4.0	6.7
Nevada	3.0	3.5	6.9	7.3	8.3	13.9
New Hampshire	1.3	1.9	3.4	3.7	4.2	8.0
New Jersey	3.2	3.4	5.8	6.2	6.9	10.4
New Mexico	2.9	3.1	6.8	7.2	8.2	12.6
New York	2.5	2.4	5.3	5.8	6.7	10.6
North Carolina	2.6	2.6	5.9	6.4	7.1	11.3
North Dakota	0.7	1.4	2.7	2.9	3.4	5.3
Ohio	2.0	2.1	4.9	5.3	6.3	10.1
Oklahoma	1.5	2.0	4.3	4.6	5.3	8.0
Oregon	2.1	2.9	5.7	6.1	6.8	11.7
Pennsylvania	2.4	2.7	5.2	5.5	6.4	10.7
Rhode Island	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>11.4</b>
South Carolina	2.7	2.8	5.9	6.4	7.2	11.4
South Dakota	1.1	1.2	3.5	3.7	4.3	6.3
Tennessee	2.3	2.7	5.7	6.2	6.9	10.7
Texas	1.6	2.1	4.4	4.8	5.3	8.4
Utah	1.0	1.6	3.6	3.8	4.3	7.5
Vermont	1.1	1.8	3.6	3.9	4.7	8.2
Virginia	2.0	2.0	4.5	4.8	5.6	9.8
Washington	2.3	2.9	5.6	6.0	6.8	11.0
West Virginia	3.1	3.3	6.9	7.3	8.4	12.4
Wisconsin	1.7	2.2	4.6	4.8	5.4	8.3
Wyoming	1.0	2.3	4.1	4.3	4.8	8.2